



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY WARNS CITIZENS TO STAY ALERT AS SEVERE WEATHER MOVES
THROUGH STATE TODAY**

Storm System Will Bring Thunderstorms, Chance of Tornadoes

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley warned citizens across North Carolina that everyone in the state needs to pay close attention to the weather today as a storm system moves across North Carolina this afternoon and evening. Forecasters say the system will bring a line of strong thunderstorms that have the potential to spawn tornadoes or cause straight line wind damage.

“A tornado watch has already been issued in the western corner of the state and additional watches are likely as the system moves to the east,” said Easley. “The greatest threat will be to the eastern two-thirds of the state later this afternoon and evening, so people should pay close attention to local weather forecasts and listen for watches or warnings.”

State and local emergency management officials are monitoring the storm’s progress along with forecasters at the National Weather Service. A tornado watch means conditions are right for tornado formation; a warning means a tornado has actually been sighted.

The danger signs of a possible tornado include hail or an approaching cloud of debris, even if a funnel cloud is not visible. Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

The safest place to be during a tornado is underground in a basement or storm cellar. If you have no basement, go to an inner hallway or smaller inner room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet. Go to the center of the room. Try to find something sturdy you can get under and hold onto to protect you from flying debris and/or a collapsed roof. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

Children at school should seek shelter in interior hallways, small closets and bathrooms. Stay away from windows. Get out of mobile classrooms. Stay out of gymnasiums, auditoriums and other rooms with a large expanse of roof. Bus drivers should be alert for bad weather on their routes.

Mobile homes, even those with tie-downs, are particularly vulnerable to damage from high winds. Go to a prearranged shelter when the weather turns bad.

If no shelter is available, go outside and lie on the ground, if possible in a ditch or depression. Use your arms to protect your head and neck and wait for the storm to pass. While waiting, be alert for the flash floods that sometimes accompany tornadoes.